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INTERVENTION IN CUBA.

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SPEECH

OF

HON. HENRY CABOT LODGE,  
OF MASSACHUSETTS,

IN THE

SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

APRIL 13, 1898.

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WASHINGTON.

1898.

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S P E E C H  
OF  
HON. HENRY CABOT LODGE.

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The Senate having under consideration the joint resolution (S. R. 149) for the recognition of the independence of the people of Cuba, demanding that the Government of Spain relinquish its authority and government in the Island of Cuba, and to withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters, and directing the President of the United States to use the land and naval forces of the United States to carry these resolutions into effect—

Mr. LODGE said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: During the entire session, since the first of December, and more especially since the destruction of the *Maine* fell with a great shock upon the people of the United States, I have felt it my duty as a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations, to which I have the honor to belong, to maintain an absolute silence on all matters connected with the questions pending between this country and Spain. I have broken through that rule on but one occasion, and that was when I counseled in this Chamber silence and patience until we could hear the report of the court of inquiry. Neither by speech here nor by interview or publication elsewhere have I broken the rule which I imposed upon myself.

But, Mr. President, the moment has now come when the committee to which I belong has made its report, and I feel it to be my duty to state the reasons which govern me and control my vote at this great crisis, and to try to make them plain to the people whom I have the very great and high honor to represent.

Mr. President, I think there is one point on which all men in this country are agreed to-day, no matter how they may differ on one proposition or another, and that agreement is that this situation must end. We can not go on indefinitely with this strain, this suspense, and this uncertainty, this tottering upon the verge of war. It is killing to business.

It is ruinous to our people in a thousand ways. It is discreditable to our Government and our country. If we are not to take action in regard to Cuba in order to bring this situation to an end, then let us stand up in the face of the world and say that we wash our hands of the whole affair; let us say that we will not intervene to save the starving, to put an end to hostilities, and that we will turn the case of the *Maine* over to a referee. If we are not prepared to do that, then let us act the other way. But whatever happens, let us end this state of unendurable suspense. That, I believe, Mr. President, is the one great desire of the entire country.

The President has submitted this momentous question to the Congress of the United States. In his hands are placed by the Constitution all the diplomatic functions of the Government. He alone can address foreign powers; he alone can carry on correspondence through his ministers and officers. Congress has no diplomatic functions whatever. The President has told us that diplomacy is exhausted, and he has handed the case over to us. What power have we got? We have but one, Mr. President. The Constitution gives to Congress—I mean to both Houses constituting the entire Congress—but one power in relation to foreign countries—the last great weapon in the armory of nations—the war power.

When a President of the United States says to Congress, as President McKinley has said, that he can go no further with diplomacy in a controversy with a foreign nation, and remits that question to the Congress of the United States, he invites them to use the only weapon they possess. The mere fact of remitting the question to Congress is invoking Congress to use the most awful power which the Constitution has conferred upon it.

That is the situation in which we stand to-day, Mr. President. We here can open no new negotiations with Madrid; we can enter on no correspondence with any other nation on the face of the earth. All that we can do is to exercise the one great power of peace or war. The President has asked us to exert that power, and in a certain way. He has invited us to exercise it by clothing him with the power to intervene by force of arms in order to produce certain results.



My deep desire, Mr. President, and all the small influence that I may possess, has been given throughout to the one object of sustaining the President of the United States and seeking in every possible way to preserve unity between the Congress and the Executive, for I believe, when we are face to face with a foreign power, that there is one duty that overrides all others, higher than politics and higher than everything else, and that is that the Congress and the people and the Executive of the United States should stand absolutely together. And now, Mr. President, when the President comes to Congress and invokes our aid in a controversy with a foreign country and asks us to give him power to intervene, I desire that that great power of war should be given to him in that way.

I am against a declaration of war, but I favor giving the President the power to intervene. I am against recognizing the government of the insurgent republic because the President of the United States, in his high responsibility, has advised Congress strongly against it. I will not myself part from that unity which I consider so much more important than aught else, and differ on that point.

I do not care to argue here the question of recognizing or not recognizing the government of the insurgents. Powerful arguments can be made both ways. We have heard one in the message of the President; we have heard another to-day from the Senator from Ohio [Mr. FORAKER] on the other side. We heard but yesterday in the Foreign Relations Committee the advice of General Lee, who has conferred such honor upon the United States by the manner in which he has represented this country at Havana, and his advice is that we should not recognize the insurgent government.

Therefore, Mr. President, without arguing that point further, I beg to say that I stand with the majority of the committee and with the President of the United States in opposing the recognition of the insurgent government at this time. It can be done, if necessary, at any moment. The President has nothing to do but to ask Mr. Palma to the White House, and the Cuban Republic stands up erect and recognized. We may safely trust that power to the President.

I said, sir, that the President has asked us for intervention. The committee have given it to him. It was not the form of resolu-

tion which I personally preferred. I voted for another in the committee. But, Mr. President, what I desired more than any special form of resolution was the unity of action of the Government of the United States in the crisis to which we have arrived. Therefore I voted to bring these resolutions into the Senate; voted to do it with all the other members of the committee. Nor do I think, Mr. President, that there is much use in differing about the words in which we order intervention. We have been wandering too long as a country amid the delusions and snares of diplomacy. Let us now come out into the clear light of day and look facts squarely in the face.

When we authorize the President to intervene and use the Army and Navy of the United States, whether we do it in the language of the message, or in the language of the House of Representatives or in the language of the Senate resolution, we create a state of war. Let us not deceive ourselves at this solemn hour. Forms of words are of but little moment in a crisis like this. It is the great central fact that concerns the people to-day. The President has asked us to mail his arm to strike with the Army and the Navy of the United States; to authorize him to go down into Cuba and enforce the pacification of the island. He has asked us to authorize him to set up a government there which shall be a stable government, and a government "capable of observing international obligations." I quote the President's own words.

What kind of government can alone observe international obligations? Only an independent government, Mr. President. Therefore the President of the United States asks us to authorize him to use the Army and the Navy to stop the fighting in Cuba and establish an independent government in that island. How can there be an independent government in Cuba while Spain is there? It is an impossibility. The recommendations of the message mean that Spain must leave that island, and I, for one, think that if that is the purpose of the message, as it clearly is, there is no harm and much good in telling the truth. If we intervene, we do not go there to take Gomez by the throat and make him stop fighting. We go there to put Spain out of that island, for in no other way can we create a government capable of observing its international obligations.

The President has asked Congress to sustain him in that policy

in its broad general lines. As I have sustained him hitherto in every step that he has taken, so far as my very humble influence went, I sustain him now when he asks us to give him this last great power of the Constitution. Therefore, Mr. President, when we vote to give the President of the United States power to intervene in the affairs of another country with the Army and Navy of the United States, we clothe him with the war power, and we had better face that great responsibility and look it in the eye like men and not attempt to shrink from what it means and try feebly to pretend that it is not there.

No man can be more averse to war than I, no one can dread more than I any act which will plunge the country into war. Mr. President, such measures as I have voted for in past years in the Senate since the Cuban crisis has been upon the country I have supported not merely because I thought they made for the interests of the insurgents, with whom I sympathize in the strongest possible manner, because they are fighting for freedom, but because I thought then, as I think now, that they were the true road to the preservation of peace.

If two years ago we had recognized the belligerency of the Cuban insurgents they would have been able to raise money, to hoist a flag at sea, and open a port; they would then have won their independence, in my judgment, and we never should have been involved. If one year ago last January we had recognized their independence, again they would have been able to raise money, to open a port, and to have established their independence themselves. I so believed then; I so believe now. Both those propositions passed by the Senate of the United States were smothered elsewhere by a wisdom which I shall not question; but I think that each of those refusals to act kept alive the Cuban difficulty, and the longer it was kept alive the nearer and the surer war came to us.

I have also for many years advocated a powerful Navy and strong coast defenses. I have advocated them because I believed that in them was the great guaranty of peace. Mr. President, if we had to-day, as we ought to have, twenty battle ships and a hundred torpedo boats, there never would have been a Cuban question; we should have been so ready and so strong that we could have laid our hands on the shoulder of Spain and said, "You must

stop;" and the contest would have been so hopeless that it never would have been entered upon. Thousands of men who fill graves in Cuba to-day, tortured into them by starvation, would be alive, and the *Maine* would still ride the seas. But, Mr. President, more conservative principles prevailed and we have not the large Navy we ought to have.

I believe in preparation for war as Washington advocated it; I believe in a rigid exclusion from America of any European extension, which was the great doctrine of the generation which followed Washington. These principles have been scoffed at as the doctrine of "jingoes." Ah, Mr. President, as Coleridge says, "Old faiths often become new heresies." If we had clung to the old faiths, if we had kept our Navy and our defenses as Washington advised, if we had looked a little further ahead into what the Monroe doctrine meant, we should not be standing on the verge of war to-day. We failed, as I believe, in certain obvious duties, and the inexorable law of compensation has brought the inevitable penalty to our doors.

Mr. President, we are not in this crisis by an accident. We have not been brought here by chance or by clamorous politicians or by yellow journals. We are face to face with Spain to-day in the fulfillment of a great movement which has run through the centuries. Out of the war which Spain wages and the manner in which she wages it have come starvation and the destruction of the *Maine*. The war comes out of Spanish misgovernment and Spanish corruption. That corruption is not of yesterday. It is very, very old. It has cost Spain all her continental colonies. It existed two hundred years ago. You can see it all portrayed in that beautiful picture of character and manners which Le Sage drew in the history of Gil Blas of Santillane. Spain was corrupt then; it was misgoverned then; and out of it has come to-day the Cuban war.

Even at this moment the corruption which Le Sage described is worse than ever. Spain is on her deathbed, buried in debt, bleeding at every vein from the revolutions in her colonies, and her officers and officials rob her, dying, as she is, in the eyes of the world. We asked General Lee yesterday when he was before us if the \$600,000 said to have been appropriated by Spain for the relief of the reconcentrados would reach them or would be spent

on the Spanish soldiers—for they are starving, too—and his reply was, “It will never reach either of them; the officials will take it all on the way.” That is what is going on in Spain, just as it was when *Gil Blas* had his adventures. That is why Cuba has rebelled.

Mr. President, this long process of Spanish decay began far back, three hundred years ago, and the vast empire of Charles V has been dying through all these centuries. The men who first struck at it, even in its pitch of pride, were the men of the dikes and the marshes of Holland. The men who next struck it and brought it down were the men of English blood, the English seamen of the sixteenth century. They fought it by an instinct, because it stood for all that meant oppression, bigotry, cruelty, and terror. Those men of Holland and England fought it because they stood for the principles of liberty and of free government.

In our veins runs the blood of Holland and the blood of England. If after all the centuries it comes to us, much as we pray to avert it, to meet Spain face to face in war, it is because we are there in obedience to a greater movement than any man can hope to control. We are there because we represent the spirit of liberty and the spirit of the new time, and Spain is over against us because she is mediæval, cruel, dying. We are not there by chance. We are there because we stand now for just the same principles for which the men stood who followed William the Silent and sailed with Drake; and if this terrible thing—this awful curse of war—must come upon us, then we can only repeat with Lincoln the words of the second inaugural, “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

Mr. President, we have exhausted the resources of diplomacy; we have made every effort that could be made. The President has been patient, more than patient. He has used every possible effort to secure a settlement at once honorable to the country and in the interest of freedom and humanity. Every effort that he has made has failed, and, saying so, he has committed the question to us.

We are told that Spain has recalled the concentration edict. We were told that last November, and yet the people have been in the pens dying ever since. We were told that Weyler's edict had been revoked then, and yet starvation has gone on. We hear



of another proclamation for another revocation of that same edict which had been already revoked, and the people are dying in Havana now and in other towns, and the President himself concludes his message with a request for money to feed the starving.

What does the Spanish order of \$600,000 amount to? It is a fraud—an absolute fraud. It is a fraud like their armistice, which invites the insurgents to come in and lay down their arms. There is nothing in it at all but baffling snares, and every man who has been in the Island of Cuba and comes before the Committee on Foreign Relations swears to the same thing.

Mr. President, we can not, in my opinion, allow that fire to burn longer at our doors. We can no longer permit those people to starve to death, brought to that hideous torture by a war measure of Spain. We can not longer suffer our commerce to be ruined, our property destroyed, our business to be darkened and depressed. Spain has refused every valid suggestion that would bring any solution, and she has given us a stone where we have asked for bread.

We can not accept, Mr. President, conditions of peace which would degrade us in the eyes of the world, and, what is infinitely more important, in our own eyes. If we were to do so, we should bring evils in the train of such a yielding which no man can estimate. We should heap wars upon the generations yet unborn which no man can contemplate without a shudder, for we should give to the world an invitation to step into the Western Hemisphere and do anything they please to the people of the United States.

There are some things, Mr. President, horrible as war is, worse than war and better than money. A nation's honor is one thing, and her duty to humanity is another.

They say that they are not our own people. They are just outside the walls of the house we call our own. Ah, Mr. President, when they say to me, "Are you your brother's keeper?" I respond, "Yes; we are the keeper of those people in Cuba," for we announced fifty years ago to the whole world that the Cuban question was an American question. We drew a ring fence around that island, and we told the people of the earth that no one should interfere there except ourselves. Here we stand, shutting out every other nation and allowing Spain to butcher those people after her own fashion. There is a great responsibility. We can not escape it,

and if we fail to meet it we shall pay the awful price for our failure, as nations always do.

The sentiment of the American people in my judgment is for peace. We are essentially a peace-loving, peace-cherishing people. But there is a sentiment in the American people that is above and beyond their love of peace. I mean among the great mass of our people whose eyes are not blinded by the glitter of too much wealth. Among these people there is a strong sentiment for peace always, but it can only be peace with honor. They cherish very deeply the honor of their country all the more, perhaps, if they have not many other possessions to cherish—the pride in being an American is very dear to them—and they do not want to see that name tarnished or brought to ignominy or dishonor.

The sentiment of my own State and my own people I have known and know now is for peace. They do not wish to see this country plunged into an unnecessary war, but neither would they see the country degraded. They would not see it dragged in the dust before the eyes of the world. If they can not have peace with honor, then they will meet war in a brave and noble spirit, as Massachusetts always has met her trials, from Concord to Baltimore.

If war must be—I hope and pray that it may yet be avoided—no nation ever went to war on higher grounds or from nobler or more disinterested motives. War is here, if it is here, by the act of Spain. We have grasped no man's territory. We have taken no man's property. We have invaded no man's rights. We do not ask their lands. We do not ask their money. We ask peace in that unhappy island—peace and freedom, not for ourselves, but for others. It is an unselfish, a pure, a noble demand; and if war does come, then, Mr. President, we do not fear to meet it. We will meet it so that the curse of Spain shall never rest again on any part of the Western Hemisphere. We do not want war; we would do anything in honor to avoid it; but if it must come, it will be a war that will prevent Spain from ever bringing misery, death, and ruin to Cuba, and agitation, unhappiness, loss, and war to the United States.

And now, Mr. President, what of the *Maine*? I suppose a good argument can be made that that is a legal question; that there are disputed facts; that it does not do to get too excited about it; but

I am so sentimental, I am so merely human, that that ship is nearer my heart than anything else. Suppose she had gone down to her death in an English harbor, blown up as she was, carrying her men with her; what do you think would have been the voice of England—the land of Nelson? I believe if it had happened in an English port England would have said, in a great and generous spirit, “We regard this with horror; we believe that it must have been an accident, but it happened in our harbor under our flag. If you think otherwise, name the reparation that you want.” Such, Mr. President, I believe would have been the reply of England; such I believe would have been our reply or that of any of the great powers.

Look now at Spain. She has done nothing but slander officers and sailors of the *Maine*, dead and living. Her ambassador to Rome said but a week ago to all Europe, in a published interview, that that ship went down because her captain neglected her and was not on board. Notorious as the sinking of the ship is the fact that Captain Sigsbee was there, and was the last man to leave is equally well known, and yet the Spanish ambassador to Rome tells that lying story to the world. Last Sunday the Spanish ambassador in London announced also to all the world through the columns of the press that the *Maine* was blown up from inside because our officers neglected their duty, feasting on shore when they should have died at their posts. That is typical of the Spanish answer, and it is a coarse insult.

They agreed on their story that the ship was blown up by accident before they even looked at her hull. We have the evidence of Captain Sigsbee before our committee as to the character of the examination which the Spaniards made—trivial, slight, careless, done for a form, to back up a story which they had already made up their minds to stand by and put forth. They have never even tried to prove that there were no mines in the harbor, and an accused man or nation who refuses to offer exculpatory evidence convicts himself. That has been the attitude of Spain—indifferent, insulting, ignoble—toward an awful disaster happening in her own harbor.

Mr. FRYE. Mr. President—

The VICE-PRESIDENT. Does the Senator from Massachusetts yield to the Senator from Maine?

Mr. LODGE. Certainly.

Mr. FRYE. Will the Senator from Massachusetts please add right here that the death of our sailors and the destruction of our ship, according to General Lee's testimony, was celebrated with banquets and champagne by the Spanish officers in Cuba?

Mr. LODGE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Maine for recalling to me the testimony of General Lee on that point yesterday. Where so much has been told it is impossible to remember all. They rejoiced in Havana, and they explained the explosion by throwing it upon our officers, slandering their character and denying their words.

I have examined that testimony from beginning to end; I have heard the evidence of Captain Sigsbee, of the torpedo experts of the Navy Department, and yesterday of the consul-general, Fitzhugh Lee. We know that that ship was anchored at a buoy never used for public ships of war, certainly not for many years; we know that she was anchored there by a Spanish official pilot; we know that the night she was blown up she had swung into a position where she had never ridden before and the only position where her broadside commanded the fort; we have the statement of General Lee and of Captain Sigsbee as to their profound belief; we can not put our hand upon the man who pressed the button, but we know that it was a submarine mine either put there for that special purpose or to defend the fortress, and Spain has never attempted to show that no mine was there.

On those unquestioned facts every man has the right to make up his own mind. Every man is entitled to his own belief, and I state mine after fifty days of careful study and a consideration of every fact. I have no more doubt about it than that I am now standing in the Senate of the United States—that that ship was blown up by a Government mine, fired by, or with the connivance of, Spanish officials. I do not say it was done by General Blanco. I exonerate him fully on the statement of General Lee. I do not say that it was done by the Government itself, but it could have been done only by experts, only by men in control of Government mines, only by men who had their hands upon the Government machinery. Others may reason from those facts as they please. To me they bear but one interpretation, and that is that the *Maine*

went to her death by Spanish treachery in the harbor of Havana and Spaniards exulted and feasted when the black deed was done.

Mr. President, I suppose it may be urged that it is proper that we should negotiate and arbitrate, but whenever I think of that solution there comes to my mind the lines of Lowell, written at another period, a very dark time in this country—written in the homely New England dialect:

Ef I turn mad dogs loose, John,  
On your front-parlor stairs,  
Would it jest meet your views, John,  
To wait an' sue their heirs?

Ah, Mr. President, it does not seem to me that this is a case for negotiation. It would have been the case for a generous opponent to have put himself greatly in the right by his treatment of it, but it seems to me we can not any more negotiate about it than a man can negotiate about an insult to his mother. What could we take if we did arbitrate? Are we going to take money for those dead men of ours?

I suppose again that I am very impracticable and very sentimental, but the idea revolts me. At the close of the civil war the great war governor of Massachusetts found his practice scattered, his small accumulations and savings gone, because he had given his time, as, indeed, he gave his life, to the service of the State and the country. It was known how much he had suffered in his practice and his purse, and there was a story circulated in the papers that his friends intended to make him collector of the port, the most highly paid office in the State of Massachusetts. The day that item of news appeared a friend of Governor Andrew met him and said to him, "Well, Governor, are you going to take the collectorship?" He paused a moment, then looked up suddenly and said, "I have stood for four years as high priest between the horns of the altar; I have poured out upon it the best blood of Massachusetts; I can not take money for that."

Mr. President, we can not take money for the dead men of the *Maine*. There is only one reparation. There is only one monument to raise over that grave, and that is free Cuba and peace in that island. That is a worthy monument, worthy of men who died under the flag they loved, died, in the cold language of the law, "in the line of duty."



They say we can not go to war about the *Maine*. Perhaps not. We are told that it is an incident. So be it. It is the outgrowth of the conditions in Cuba; it is the outgrowth of that Spanish rule; it is the outcome of that Spanish war, and it calls upon us to end the causes that made it possible. The men who were hurled from the sleep of life into the sleep of death call upon us from their graves to root out forever the causes which made their slaughter possible.

We are told that we must not go to war on the narrow ground of revenge. Revenge is an ugly word, although Bacon tells us that it is nothing but wild justice. No, not revenge; but we must have reparation for the *Maine*. We can not as a nation belittle that case or refuse to demand a great and shining atonement for our dead sailors. If we allow that to drop aside, to pass away into an endless tangle of negotiation and law and discussion, we are lost to all sense of brotherhood; we are lost to all love of kith and kin; our uniform will no longer be an honor and a protection; it will be a disgrace and danger to wear it.

Your men on your ships are sullen to-day because they think that the Government is not behind them. There are mutterings among the men who wear your uniform because they think you have not striven to redress the awful slaughter of their comrades. You must maintain the honor of the uniform and of the flag under which the men died. Surely, there never was a more righteous cause than this for any nation to ask for justice. That gigantic murder, the last spasm of a corrupt and dying society, which carried down our ship and our men, cries aloud for justice.

Mr. President, I care but little what form of words we adopt. I am ready to yield my opinions to those about me in Congress. Still more ready am I to defer to the wishes of the Executive, who stands and must stand at our head; but I want now to arm that Executive with powers which shall enable him in the good providence of God to bring peace to Cuba and exact justice for the *Maine*. [Applause in the galleries.]

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